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SUBJECT: LITHUANIA: BACKGROUND FOR PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS
ROUNDTABLE AT 2007 UNGA

REF: A. SECSTATE 125456

[1](#)B. VILNIUS 611

[1](#)1. SUMMARY. Lithuania actively promotes democracy in the "new neighborhood," especially in Belarus. Post has good relations with NGOs, but limited funding to support them. The Ambassador and Post work with NGOs, with the GOL, and in the media to promote tolerance and encourage the GOL to address the historical injustices of the Nazi and Soviet occupations. End Summary.

Lithuania's Democracy Promotion

[1](#)2. The GOL has an active democracy promotion program, which focuses on Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (ref B). The GOL's priority for human rights issues and for promoting democracy is Belarus. The Lithuanian MFA provides support to the families of those who have been imprisoned for political reasons in Belarus and organizes events such as a recent concert on the border to promote contact between the people of the two nations. The GOL's parliamentary exchange program helps to strengthen democratic principles in new democracies in the region.

[1](#)3. The National Endowment for Democracy provides financial support for the activities of the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Lithuania. USAID provides financial support and computer equipment for the correspondence education program at the European Humanities University (EHU). Post maintains close contact with EHU staff.

Post's Support For NGOs
And Promotion Of Tolerance

[1](#)4. Post maintains close contact with Lithuanian NGOs in general, but financial assistance is limited. We coordinate some training opportunities through programs such as the International Visitors' program and we are in the final years of funding through programs initiated several years ago. For example, Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) money supports training for judges, prosecutors, and police to combat Trafficking in Persons.

[1](#)5. Post works with NGOs and with the GOL to promote tolerance and human rights and to encourage the GOL to address the historical injustices of the Nazi and Soviet occupations. The Ambassador spoke about tolerance and antidiscrimination legislation at a GOL-hosted conference in March. Post actively discusses the issue of Jewish communal property restitution with Government officials and community groups, maintains close relations with U.S.-based missionary groups, and works with the Government and local and international Jewish groups to encourage the GOL to research

the historical boundaries of a Jewish cemetery in Vilnius and to protect it as a cultural heritage site. The Ambassador publicly criticizes anti-Semitic statements in the media and encourages GOL officials to do so. Over the last year, Post supported the efforts of the Jewish museum in Vilnius to teach local youth about the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, and tolerance in schools across the country. We addressed, in a leading daily newspaper, the importance of ensuring a diversity of cultural treasures and guarding against discrimination in the preservation of cultural heritage -- especially where a national, religious, or ethnic group is unable to ensure adequate preservation on its own.

LEADER